

### **REMARKS**

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the above amendment and following remarks.

#### **Specification**

The title has been amended as suggested by the Examiner.

#### **35 U.S.C. § 112 Rejections**

Claim 2 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The rejection questions whether the shifting of the selection target in both row and column directions is supported by the specification. Shifting the selection target of the intra-group processors in column and row directions is clearly shown in FIG. 1. In FIG. 1, the intra-group processors IP (1, 1) to IP (2, 4) are arranged two-dimensionally. Accordingly, to use all of the eight intra-group processors, it is necessary to shift the selection target of the intra-group processors in column and row directions. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of Claim 2 be withdrawn.

#### **Prior Art Rejections**

Claims 1-6 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Mason (U.S. 6,238,346 B1). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 1 requires a combination of: (i) an electroacoustic conversion unit including electroacoustic conversion devices with M rows and N columns, in which sub-arrays are arranged . . . , (ii) intra-group processors with J rows and K columns provided corresponding to the respective sub-arrays, and (iii) a selection unit that selects intra-group processors with j rows ( $j \leq J$ ) and k columns ( $k < K$ ) as a target.

Mason discloses, in FIG. 1, that transmission signals are supplied from a transmitter 22 to transducer elements 14 via switches 26, 28, 30, etc. Also, a receiver circuitry 50 receives reception signals from the transducer elements 14 via switches 42, 44, 46, etc. Generally, when a switch is inserted between a transducer and a transmitter

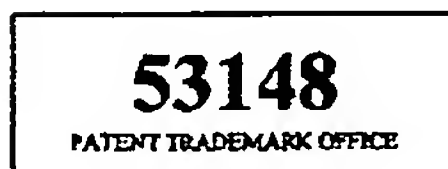
or a receiver, a signal is deteriorated by the switch or crosstalk of a signal is caused between adjacent switches. Because, in the invention of claim 1, the intra-group processors supply and receive signals to and from the electroacoustic conversion devices, this deterioration or crosstalk of a signal due to the switches is not produced. Therefore, the rejection should be withdrawn.

Additionally, the rejection considers that the switches 26, 28, 30, 42, 44, 46 correspond to the intra-group processors of the applicant's claims. The switches in Mason sequentially connect the transmitter and receiver to subarrays (col. 4, line 55-57). Claim 1 requires intra-group processors to have J rows and K columns, with the selection unit selecting j rows and k columns. Mason's switches cannot be considered as the claim 1 intra-group processors and the switches 26, 28, 30, 42, 44, 46 taught in Mason, at best might, correspond to claim 1's selection unit that selects intra-group processors. Therefore, the rejection is based on an erroneous interpretation of the reference and should be withdrawn.

Claims 2-6 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependence on independent Claim 1 and the rejection of these claims should be withdrawn. Applicants do not concede the correctness of the rejection.

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

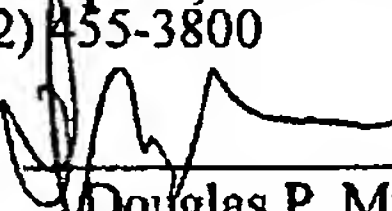


Dated: Feb. 25, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

HAMRE, SCHUMANN, MUELLER &  
LARSON, P.C.  
P.O. Box 2902  
Minneapolis, MN 55402-0902  
(612) 455-3800

By:

  
Douglas P. Mueller  
Reg. No. 30,300  
DPM/llf